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SPIRIT TO SPIRIT PUBLICATIONS  
TULSA, OKLAHOMA  
1981



## A PARAPHRASE OF EPHESIANS

I. (1) This letter is from Paul. I am your friend, but I am more than that. My claim to address you in this pastoral letter is that it has pleased God to call me into the apostolate. I am one sent, sent from God, and sent to you. As the Father sent the Son, even so the Son has sent out His Apostles into all the world. I am, by the Master's choice, among them, and my commission has carried me even to you. You will, I know, acknowledge it, because you too are called. You are the holy congregation of the Lord in your city of Asia. You have believed in Him Who came, and, looking for no other, continue to believe in Him, as He daily and hourly elicits and rewards your faith. (2) My heart's desire for you is that you taste and see how gracious the Lord is, and that the Lord will give to you, His people, the blessing of peace. That I myself wish you well goes without saying. But I am not speaking of mortal man's benevolence; I invoke upon you the benevolence of God. I am in this petition holding you beneath the love of the Creator, revealed to us and brought to us in the Person of Him Whom we delight to call our Lord.

(3) Glory be to God, to God Who has given us the Son, the everlasting Son, the King of Glory! To speak thus is not extravagant, still less profane. It is wholly legitimate. For us to ascribe glory to God is not to use an unknown language, to deal in an improper currency. We have in ourselves the capacity—small though it may be—to glorify God, because we have caught some beams of the glory of that Central Orb which reigns and shines

for ever. The good God has chosen us; He has spared some of His own glory even for us. He has enfolded us with all the glory that our little spirits are competent to entertain. It is, of course, a purely spiritual blessing. There is no kind of warrant of worldly prosperity. Not 'flocks and herds,' but spiritual wealth. (4) Our footsteps tread the earth, but we are of the company of heaven. In Christ two Natures and two states of life are joined—

The heaven is not too high;  
His praise may thither fly:  
The earth is not too low;  
His praises there may grow.

Christ has begotten us to be of His family. He has lifted us to the divine level where God is. (5) We cannot know of our own selves how wonderful that is. The genesis of it is beyond the canvas of our picture. We see only a tiny fragment of an eternal mystery. It is perhaps a few years, it may be only a few months, since your conversion. That was a single point in the long history of the world, the human end of a vast spiritual process. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, the divine purpose lay secret in the mind of the Creator. It was a purpose of His own, relative to Himself. It does not, or at least does not in the first place, relate to sin. It might even be said that the entire history of the human race is secondary. In so far as we can, in imagination, penetrate to the ultimate, central purpose of the Almighty, it was simply to call man into fellowship with Himself. The Incarnation seems to be of the absolute divine purpose, sin or no sin. Sin came, and the Cross was then God's remedy for sin.

(6) Accordingly, it may be said that God's purpose in any case was Christ; and this sacred title 'Christ' carries

with it, as a sure corollary, the further concept of the Body of Christ, the Church. Christ cannot be thought of *in vacuo*. He is the firstborn among many brethren. God through Him brings many sons to glory. Creation, Redemption, Adoption, that is the order of events. And it all comes from God. Of His own will He ordained it, and fulfilled it. Why? That there might be human hearts to love Him, and human lips to praise Him. And so, when we praise God, we must never stay on the thought of our own act or merit as God-praisers. We are to magnify the Divine Name. We are to say 'We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee'—and, when we have said all we can, and can think of no more, then, lest praise be marred by any tincture of self-consciousness, we get back to God Himself, and say 'We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.' So, in a sense that the author of Ecclesiastes did not and could not mean, 'The spirit shall return to God Who gave it.'

(7) Thus the beginning and the end is 'Glory be to God.' He has poured out upon us the ocean of His loving-kindness. He withheld not from us His Beloved Son. We were in Egypt, and the Christ of God brought us out of the house of bondage. We were in Babylon, and the Christ of God released for us His precious life. We were in chains to sin. He struck the chains asunder, and we were free. (8) The poor man can only give a little. The rich man can give more. But God is infinite, and He has given all. The heavens were opened, and all the gifts of God descended, abounding and cascading on us, wisdom to know that which had been unknowable, (9) discernment of that which passeth understanding, eyes opened to apprehend the hidden thing which no man saw, the thing which was once a secret, but is now a

received mystery of our faith, a revealed sacrament: the truth about God's purpose for the world!

God from the beginning knew what He would do. But not at once. The time was not yet. And so the purpose waited and matured. The Mind of God is unchanging, inflexible, but infinitely patient and unhasting. Through the long centuries men continually cried out, and said 'What is God doing? Why does He not act?' But the Heavenly Father is not goaded into untimely action by the importunity of man. The time was not yet. (10) At last the long process of events had reached its consummation. The hour struck. The new era was ready to be born. And then the scattered threads of progress were all drawn together into one pattern. All men, all nations, all cultures, all created things received a new significance, a new unity, the Many in the One. They were all drawn together under one Head, even Christ. Angels and Archangels had always adored the Son of Heaven. Now they knew a fresh loyalty to the Saviour of Earth. The sons of earth had always looked up wistfully to Heaven. Now they received a new answer to their yearnings, 'the tender mercy of their God, the dayspring from on high.' And this is the hidden thing which we now know.

(11) But, you may say, this is extravagant, this talk of knowing the secret purpose of Creation. It would be, of course, inordinate, preposterous, but we are the inheritors of what Christ has done. Inheritors, do I say? More true would it be to call us Christ's inheritance. We are the earthly property of which His human Incarnation has made Him King. (12) One race of mankind—that to which I belong—has been held for this for centuries. The divine Selection—some call it Election, but I prefer the more liberal word—laid a moulding hand upon our



race, the sons of Abraham. It was for no merit of our own. Did not Moses say 'The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you' (*Deut.* vii. 7, 8)? It was the sheer choice of God. His purpose is the thing that matters. It was His will that there should be a soil prepared, a garden in which His herb of grace should spring, and in good time come to its maturity. We Jews lived through all the ups and down of our long history in hope that, Simeon-like, some day our straining eyes would see the salvation which God had been preparing. (13) Now it has dawned, and not on Jews only, but on all the world. You who read this are of Gentile blood. But truth knows no boundaries. The word of truth runs freely and is not circumscribed. Your eyes were at first not opened, as ours were, or should have been, to hear the whispered word, 'The Master is come, and calleth for you.' But God proclaimed His news, and at the same time quickened the rudimentary organ of your spiritual hearing, and you knew that salvation was for you as well. You found that you had the gift of faith, and you directed the whole operation of all the faith you had in the true way.

(14) You were reborn in Baptism. You received the Cross upon the brow. You bent the head, and there was pressed upon the crown of it the Seal of His apostolic gift, which marked you God's sons and daughters, children still, as we all are, but adult in the possession of the full franchise of the Saints, the Seal which is not an end but a beginning, 'to continue His for ever, and daily increase in His Holy Spirit more and more,' the Seal by which in the great day of reckoning the Lord will know who are His.

This gift of the Spirit is a true gift. It exists and bears fruit now. But it is too great a thing to operate completely in the conditions of this life. It demands a fuller field than the life of earth can furnish. It is a foretaste, an earnest of what shall be. We are already of the Church, redeemed, and, in the measure of our competence, sanctified. But there is an infinite world of possibilities ahead of us. For that man is not ready. If some eager angel were to invite a company of plodding men, 'Come, fly with us to the Throne of God,' the men would make answer, 'Sir, we have no wings. We are still leaden-footed, tied to the ground.' Yet there will come a day when impotence is ended, and the love of God will possess every corner of our being. He will give the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. We shall have power then to do the one thing that is needed and is all-sufficing, to enter into the joy of our Lord and to love and serve Him there for ever. Then we shall really belong to God, not only in His loving purpose, as we do now, but in our full response. Then we can really say 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.'

And that not for our sake or our advantage, but for the completion of His purpose. Remember the words of the old prophet, from whom I quoted before about the garment of praise. He says, 'They shall be called trees of righteousness.' And how does he go on? 'That He might be glorified.'

(15) Good friends have told me of your loyalty to our Lord, and of how devotion to the Master has bred in you the proper fruit of Christian faith, devotion to the welfare of 'even the least of these His brethren.'  
(16) Thank God for it. My thanksgivings and my petitions come welling up together till I know not which is which. I pray for you continually. My intercessions rise up

night and day in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord to the Father, to Whose glorious throne we have in that name perpetual access. (17) And the whole burden of them is that more and more of His glory and His grace may rest upon you. May the eternal wisdom make you wise. May all the veils be torn away, so far as that may be in this life, and the full glory of the Revelation come flooding in upon you, so that your knowledge may be directed to the true end. (18) You have hearts to love and eyes to see. May your hearts be opened and your eyes enlightened more and more. Then you will know for certain the divinely-planned ideal to which the Voice is calling you. For the moment it is, at your end, only a Hope, and has for you the limitations of that virtue. But behind it there is the Voice of God, and so you may be sure that your hope leads somewhere.

God is the Lord of glory. No frailty mars the perfection of His being. He possesses all things. Yet He is willing to receive something, and to allow His perfect glory to be augmented by that which we can give, the free offerings of our love and service. We are already God's inheritance. An estate, a property, belongs to its possessor. But the land is not conscious. The fields do not know whose they are. But we, God's husbandry, can know. And we can give something. The green blades of grass can go on living and growing, and that is all that they can do. In the estate of Christ's Church, militant here in Earth, each little blade of grass can bend its head in conscious allegiance. We know Who made us, Who redeemed us, and why we are alive. So the great God, Who possesses all things, enters upon a new inheritance, as we feel the breath of His spirit, the gentle rain of His mercy, the sunshine of His pardon, and, one by one, awake.

(19) Calculate, if you can, the gigantic power behind all this. Sons, quickened into life and consciousness. We say that we believe. Yes, but what a miracle that is! It means that there is a bridge which joins time with eternity, a road which leads from earth to heaven, and the feet of believers have been set on it. There are what are called the seven wonders of the world. One of them is at Ephesus. They are great feats of architecture, or great products of the sculptor's art. But this is the Wonder of the universe. It does not mean that the hand of man has reared a tall structure, pushing up a little way into the air. It means that the majesty of God came sweeping down from heaven, and that the Infinite was domiciled among us.

(20) We see this power above all in the victory of Easter. Death was till then the great prison-keeper. Once the dark gates had closed upon a human life, there was no return. Or if, as in answer to the prayer of an Elijah, or at such a summons as 'Lazarus, come forth,' the gates did open and one here and there returned, it was but for another period of mortal life. But this time the power of Death was broken. A body lay lifeless in the sepulchre, behind the great stone in Joseph's Garden. God's finger touched Him, and He sprang to life. Not back to the former earthly life, with the limitations and circumscriptions which are, of course, the necessary conditions of a genuine humanity, but to a new, victorious life. 'I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore.'

Christ is in countless ways the reversal of human expectations, and in no way more startlingly than by the Resurrection. If there was one thing that all men had, willy-nilly, to acknowledge, it was the fact that at the end of life comes death. Christ lived and died. Death

had his usual triumph. But it was a short-lived mastery. 'Death's pale flag' was hoisted for a day, and for a second day, and on the third day it was hauled down. And the Lamb of God, flying His own flag, was raised from the dead and entered into His glory. It was the beginning of the resumption of the original glory, which He had with the Father before the world was, but that glory was touched now with an added quality. The victory had been won within the terms of human life. The Risen Christ is victorious Mankind.

In what we call the Ascension, which follows hard upon the triumph over death, the Son of God finally resumes the attributes of Godhead, but He is still Son of Man, Ambassador of Humanity, High Priest of Earth. He has taken our nature, not for one human generation only, but so as never more to lay it off, and thus it is that in Him man is now lifted to the divine level, where God is.

(21) Consider for a moment what this means. In the world beyond our sight, as well as some evil spirits as yet unsubdued, there are spiritual beings of august authority: Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers—the Tetrarchs and Satraps of the Celestial Empire—but Christ is over all. Yes, and must ever be. Whatever ministers of heavenly state our risen selves may encounter in the life hereafter, and whatever hierarchy may be gathered, rank on rank, about the throne, Christ still will occupy the throne. Above every kind of being that imagination can conceive, present or future, good or evil, Christ is supreme.

(22) But perhaps someone will say, 'What is this to us? We do not doubt that your picture is true enough, and that the Lord Jesus is above all. But heaven is far away.' My brothers, heaven is here. (23) This same Jesus, Who

is exalted at the right hand of God the Father, is the Head of the Church. Within ten days of His heavenly crowning, the faithful on Earth were greeting His return in the Spirit. He began at Pentecost to have, for the second time, and this time until the end of the world, an earthly Body. That Body is the Church. Of it we are living parts. I, Paul, you people of the seven cities, and all other faithful souls, are limbs—eyes, hands and feet—of that Christ-Body. The body is the instrument which every person has wherewith to accomplish the purposes of his will. In the Church the purpose and the will are those of Christ. We are the instrument. My hand, as I pen these words, your eyes, as you see them, or your ears as you hear them read aloud, your feet, as you go about your Father's business and your own, are doing what Christ wills to be done. To Him all power is given in Heaven and Earth. He reigns in glory at the right hand of the Father. Yet His earthly Body, the Church, has only just begun to have a life. It is yet in its infancy. We are the primitive Church. There is vast human material to be gathered in. One by one, as we are converted and baptized, we fill in the outlines, man the bare benches, realize the vocations, give human flesh and blood to the divine intention, and so, though it may sound paradoxical to say this of the perfect Master, Christ is more and more fulfilled. Therefore I say to you, as to a company of bell-ringers, tune in your instruments, ring in the Christ that is to be.

II. (1) Ringers! You have your hands upon the ropes. But remember another use for ropes. They are flung into the sea to save else drowning men. You were adrift once in a sea of sin, not having learned to swim, or, if you had some skill, not able to keep afloat for very long,

or perhaps there was some bit of wood to which you clung. (2) In any case you drifted with the tide. You were not masters of your fate or captains of your soul. The windy gusts of passion and self-will, the devilish promptings of the evil one, drove you this way and that. You can see what you were like by looking at the heathen family next door. They have, it must be supposed, some sort of conscience, but they don't listen to it. They disobey. (3) You were like that. All of us, in our various ways, you in your pagan darkness, I in my Pharisaic pride, were like that. We pleased ourselves in the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life. The Lord saw what we had made of ourselves, and behold, it was very bad. We were fit objects for the Wrath of God.

(4) But what, as I have said elsewhere, but what if God, though He might have been thought willing to exhibit His wrath so as to make known His power, nevertheless endured with much long-suffering anger-deserving vessels which had become fit for destruction, that He might make known the wealth of His glory upon vessels of compassion? (5) It is indeed what came to pass. His property is always to have mercy. Our sins He hated, but He loved us sinners. We were dead. He brought about a Resurrection. (6) We were earthbound. He brought about an Ascension. I was writing in the first chapter of this letter about our Lord's victory over death. Well, I use the same, or almost the same, language now about ourselves. The only difference is that I did not use the word 'quicken' of the Lord, and the great words 'on the right hand of God' are for Him only, not for us. Yet it remains true that what the Father did for the Son, that in essentials He did also for us. The thing that is to us now a grievous remembrance, God washed away, the thing which would have remained an intoler-

able burden, He annihilated. With loving touch, He quickened us with the risen life of Christ—mind you, it was all pure mercy, not earned or deserved, the sheer bounty of unmerited gift. Christ is risen! We are risen.

That emergence from the Baptismal Water was a rising from the dead with Christ. The days from the Friday of the Passion to the Day of Triumph represent for us the years of our unregenerate life, and then our repentance and our Baptism. The forty days between our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension were foreshortened for us into one crowded hour of glorious life. We found ourselves not only risen from death but in Christ, in Christ Who is in Heaven, and therefore in the heavenly realm ourselves.

(7) What was it for? In a way it was for us, for our salvation. And yet not in order that we might say 'We are the saved; we are the Elect.' First and foremost it was that Christ should say 'I have chosen them. I have saved them.' But we do come into the picture, even as it is. Consider the infinite compassion of God: it has saved even you and me. (8) That is the thing to remember. 'There, but for the Grace of God, goes X.' (9) No merit, no arithmetical computation of deservings, no smug presentation of licences without endorsement, no place for any sort of pride—all Grace, and the little hand which you extend to grasp this unspeakable gift is faith. Don't ever think that you did it. Don't ever think that it is fortunate for the Almighty that He had you to serve Him. Pride gets you nowhere. Humble acceptance of the gift is wealth and happiness. (10) Because you must remember, when all is said and done, God made us. In the first instance He created us from nothing. At our regeneration, He created us again in the Body of Christ. And the purpose of this regenerating act, was to give us,



each one, a vocation. There are certain things that you, and you, and you, and I, can do, which no one else could do. They may be greater or smaller than the things which are for others to do. What matters is that they are your things, your vocation.

(11) Your experience since your Conversion and your Baptism has been so full and wonderful that I daresay you are rather inclined to forget the past. I do not want you to brood over it or to be depressed by it. But there it is. You are newcomers to the Church of God. You are Gentiles, you were called out of heathenism.

Circumcision in itself is only a symbol. Racial or cultural distinctions are of no account. What matters about Abraham is that he believed. Nevertheless, it was the symbol of a real thing. Judaism was by far the clearest and most direct of all the ways in which God was preparing mankind for what was to come. Israel was then the Church of God, the only Church there was. The feet of the Children of Israel were set on the Rock of Ages. They were in contact with Eternal Reality.

(12) You were outside the range of that. Whereas they were citizens, you were aliens. The Covenant was made with Abraham, the father of the race, and with Moses, first leader of the nation. The 'peculiar people' was Israel. The promises were made to them. To Abraham it is said 'In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' For you there was in those *ante Christum* days no covenant, no citizenship, no promises. And to be without promises means to be without hope. Nay, it means to be without God. The world for you was unilluminated by the clear beams of Revelation. Some of your best thinkers have nobly set themselves to climb by the Way of Discovery, but the Way of Revelation was not made known to you. There was no 'Thus saith the Lord.'

(13) From those remote deserts where you lived the dim half-life of those to whom God is as yet unrevealed, you were summoned by the trumpet of the Gospel. How did it come to you? Or, deeper, and more pertinent question, why did it come to you? Because Christ loved you and desired you to be of His Church. The Precious Blood which fell from His five wounds, was shed, not for Jews only, but for the world.

(14) We have heard tell that Pilate and Herod made friends over the condemnation of the Master. It was an incident in the lives of two unscrupulous men, almost, if it be true that there are such things in God's world, an accident. But what befell you was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. By the virtue of the Cross of Jesus, God made you His friends. The Jews were, in their dull, blind way, the friends of God. But you were apart from God's ancient people, and there was what seemed an impassable barrier.

(15) But barriers are sometimes broken down. You may have heard that at the hour of our Lord's death, the veil of the Temple of Jerusalem was rent in twain. It was the curtain that hung before the Holy of Holies, where the Glory of the Presence was believed to rest. It was a stern line of demarcation. There was no access. Only the High Priest, once a year, in fear and trembling, armed with blood of sacrifice, passed within the Veil. But the Cross rent the curtain, and made straight in the Temple a highway to our God.

This was not all. There was another barrier. Between the Outer Court of the Gentiles and the middle precincts of the Temple there was, and still is, a wall three cubits high. Beyond this Gentiles who may have come to gaze at the Temple, perhaps to offer gifts, may never go.

Along the wall at intervals there are pillars, with inscriptions, some in Greek, some in Latin, and the words are:

NO MAN OF ANOTHER NATION TO ENTER WITHIN THE  
FENCE AND ENCLOSURE AROUND THE TEMPLE. AND  
WHOEVER IS CAUGHT WILL HAVE HIMSELF TO BLAME  
THAT HIS DEATH ENSUES.

There is actually an episode in my own life which touches this. Some of you will know that it was because I was alleged to have brought Trophimus of Ephesus beyond the barrier, that I was arrested in Jerusalem, and am a prisoner to this day. This shews how seriously the right of entry is reserved for Jews. What happened to me is a small personal thing. What matters is that, whereas the visible barrier and the warning still stand to keep Gentiles from the House of God, in the world of reality the prohibition has been once for all invalidated. It has become a thing of nought.

Christ has thus made peace between Jew and Gentile. We were two peoples, and we are now one Church. The prophet Isaiah speaks of beating swords into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, the destroying panoply of war into the constructive instruments of peace. Our Lord has done this, as we might say, with His own hands. I mean by His Nativity, and by His life as the One Universal Man and, above all, by the sacrifice of His life, the giving of His spirit and body to the spiritual and physical torment of the Cross. Thus, by the blood of a new and universal covenant, He did away with the estrangement, and brought us all to be at peace with God. He died in the No Man's Land between the contending armies, that it might be a home for every man.

(16) What was this estrangement? The material barrier in the Temple of Jerusalem was the wall of which

I have spoken. But the barrier in actual life, day by day, was the Law. The main purpose of the Mosaic Law stands, and will stand, to direct men into the Good Life, but it fostered a legalizing spirit, and besides that there were many accretions of which the intention, or anyhow the effect, was to separate Jew from Gentile, and to keep the life of Jews within a ring fence of prohibitions. Thus the Jew says to the Gentile, 'I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, nor drink with you, nor pray with you.'

All that has vanished like a dream. The Patriarch Jacob laid his hands on the heads of his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and stayed not to observe the conventional law by which the elder son has the blessing. Our Lord lays His hands on the heads of two races, one, in covenanted grace, the elder, and the other younger, but He binds them into one body, His own Body, the Church.

Abraham was the father of the Jews, but Adam was the father of us all. The Second Adam was the recapitulation and regeneration of mankind, the New Humanity, wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile, but the one recreated man in Christ. So the old distinctions become meaningless, and the old hostility is buried in the Holy Sepulchre. By His Cross He overcame the sharpness of the enmity between us and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all, yes, all believers. He came, like Melchizedek, the King of Salem, and said to the troubled waters of suspicion, intolerance and hatred, 'Peace, be still.'

(17) The old Greeks used to say that a city should never be so large that a deep-chested herald could not make his voice to be heard all through the streets of it. Our Saviour's voice has reached those who were at hand,

those of His own nation, and those who were far off, even on the outer limits of the Gentile world. As the prophet Haggai said, 'In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord.' A road begins on Calvary, and winds through history up to God. Along it two nations side by side are led up to the Father. One Spirit sanctifies, illuminates and guides them. They have one purpose and one goal.

(19) You Gentiles, who were despised and rejected by the Jews, whom I have heard cursed by Jewish lips as dogs and swine, who at best were admitted one by one as proselytes and adherents, with Israel and not of Israel, aliens, allowed on sufferance to be licensed sojourners within our gates, taxed but not represented, having a form of godliness but denied the power thereof, have now the freedom of the city. It is a privilege to have the right to say *Civis Romanus sum*. But you can say *Nos corporis Christi membra sumus*. In the earliest meaning of the Biblical word 'holy' there was the idea of separateness. It may have denoted in the beginning a merely ceremonial purity, but it soon acquired a spiritual meaning, with the consequent danger of spiritual exclusiveness—'Come not near me, for I am holier than thou.' But now the one thought of the holy people, the saints, is to evangelize, to say to all who will, 'Come with us, if you have heard that God is with us.' So Gentile becomes, not blood-brother, but brother in Christ, with Jew, sons now of the one Father, growing together in one family.

(20) To change the metaphor, imagine some great pile of masonry, with columns and arches and traceried windows and high vaulted roof. The foundations were well and truly laid by the patient hands of apostles and prophets, who planted on what was at first an empty site a Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Since then the

fabric has been growing, stone by stone, and it is seen to be none other than the Body of Christ. Christ was, of course, the one Foundation, but He is the End as well as the Beginning. He is the Head of the Corner, the Copping-stone, the Crown of the building. (21) At His will the stones combine and harmonize with one another. They are alive, they breathe, they learn day by day more exactly the pattern which they are designed to realize; they grow in holiness, and by virtue of their kinship with the Lord Christ, they grow into a temple of the Living God. (22) His loving-kindness is in the midst of the temple; wait for it. His Spirit is the life of the temple; let Him possess your spirits.

III. (1) It is because of all this that I have a deep concern for you. I am in prison, and why? Because I cared so much about my apostolate to the Gentile world, to you and such as you, that I became obnoxious to my own nation. So you are the innocent cause of my imprisonment. (2) I take it you all know that God made me a Steward of the Mysteries of His Grace to the non-Jewish peoples. (3) It was not of my seeking or of my discovering. There was the Voice from Heaven on the Damascus Road, and thereafter there has been continual spiritual enlightenment. The matter of it is momentous beyond words. A world-secret was made known to me.

(4) I said this briefly on an earlier page of this letter. If you have read that with care, you will know something of what I have to say about the marvellous disclosure which has been made of the true meaning of the Person and Work of Christ, and of the Scriptural prophecies concerning Him.

(5) The Messiah was, as you know, long expected among the Jews, but it was taken for granted that He

would be some sort of National Champion. Generation after generation passed, and no one knew or guessed the truth. It abode in the purpose of the Eternal. And then to the holy wisdom of apostles and the eager vision of prophets, men who live in the Spirit and are taught of the Spirit day by day, the unknown, undreamed-of thing was manifested. (6) And what does it reveal? Why, this. You know it. I have said it already. I go about the world saying it. But to-day, as I write in my lodging, with the soldier guarding me, I am possessed by it. I feel that I could rise to my feet and stamp up and down the boards of my back room, and shout aloud the gigantic tidings which inhabit me. The Gospel is for the world. It is the Catholic Gospel. The peoples of the world are co-inheritors, concorporate, co-partners in the fulfilment of the promise that God made to Abraham and has re-made in Christ. The Gospel has come, no national privilege, no favoured-treatment clause in a covenant, no qualified salvation, but in its glorious entirety, in the prodigal fulness of the divine munificence, to every man. It is for you, and all the world.

(7) And I am one of those whose part it is to spread abroad these tidings. I was selected for that very purpose. As I told the Jews from the steps of the Antonia Castle in Jerusalem, the Lord said to me, 'I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.' And indeed there has been given me some gift for this work. I have felt, as I faced furious mobs, or endured incessant hardships, that I had power from on high.

(8) God can do all things. He has performed in my person the most wonderful miracle that I know of. He has taken me, the ex-persecutor, unqualified, unfurnished, undeserving, the last person, it might be thought, to have this holy calling. He has unlocked His

treasury. He has given me the right to impart to every man who hears my voice or reads my written words the whole of this unaccountable largesse. Jesus Christ is for the whole world. And I am one of those who are called to go about the world and say so.

(9) It is indeed an overwhelming privilege to open a door, and let the world come in. I feel like the trusted steward of a great house, instructed by his master to exhibit to visitors the wealth of the domain. Only, those who come are not casual visitors, brought thither by curiosity and tarrying but an hour. They do not come to stand and gaze at the treasures exposed in glass cases to a cursory view. They take them, and have them for their very own. And it will be the same for others, to-morrow, and for ever. The supply wastes not, and the royal bounty does not fail.

(10) And all this has come to pass in our generation. God knew what He would do. To His Creator-wisdom, the periods that we call past, present, future, are all one. They are held together in the all-embracing vision of Omniscience. Time-ages pass, and when the era of probation is fulfilled, a light shines, the speech of God issues from the silence, and man is aware of a new thing. And not man only. Stretch your imagination. Summon up your faith, and see to what far-off boundaries the light-waves pursue their eager way. Figure to yourselves the hosts of Heaven, Michael and Gabriel, Raphael, Ithuriel, Cherubim and Seraphim—what, will the line stretch out to the end of being?—ten thousand times ten thousand, myriads of heavenly voices singing a new song. Whence came it to them? Where was it caught, this strange, sweet melody of Jesus and Redemption and Mankind? My brothers, I in my prison, you in your workshops and your homes, and the other little companies



of believing men and women, in Antioch and Corinth and Philippi and the other outposts of the faith, we, the Church, Christ's Body, are the heralds of it. The work is of God, the report of it comes to His angels from our lips. There is one Christ, and the Church is His evangelist. From the beginning the heavenly hosts adored the Eternal, Only-begotten Son. And now there falls on their rapt ears the news which sends them to their knees again before the Incarnate, the Crucified, the Risen, the Ascended, the Corner-stone of a terrestrial Church. Truly the divine wisdom is infinite. His purpose was to call man into fellowship with Himself, and then to make man His messenger to the whole of the created universe.

(11) The divine purpose was eternal. Only when the time came did it emerge from the secret counsels of the Almighty into history, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Way and the Door. They are now wide open. Not even the youngest and timidest disciple need be afraid to pass through the Door, and follow the Way. There is that in Him which satisfies every need. (12) There are among us different schools of thought. Some love to feel that there is 'nothing between God and me,' or 'I can kneel down and be in immediate contact with the Lord of heaven and earth.' This happy boldness is wholly justifiable. Another will say, 'I like to approach along some ordered road, to use the means of grace.' This kind of access, too, is good, and freely available. The answer to many seeming problems of alternatives is often 'Both.' There is ground for every kind of faithful confidence. The quality of faith varies from man to man, and each believer has faith after his own kind, and in his own degree. But for all of us at the far end is He Who changeth not, and therefore we, the sons of men, are not consumed.

(13) Accordingly, faint not, even though my outward man be tried with heavy affliction. I, as you know, have been deprived of my liberty. It is, as I have said, for your sakes. And if before long I am deprived also of my life, that also would be because I would not shrink from obeying, and declaring to you, the whole counsel of God. The Gospel has been given to me to proclaim. I proclaimed it to the Gentile world. For that I suffer, and it is likely that for that before long I shall die. For what is already accomplished it is fitting that you should give thanks to God. It is an honour to any part of the Church that one of the apostles should be counted worthy to suffer for the Name. It would be an even more signal honour if some day the final verdict of a contemptuous Caesar should enrol him in the noble army of martyrs.

(14) In the meantime I daresay you sometimes wonder how I think about you. You know that I care for you, and am interested in all that befalls you. Above all, I desire your growth in grace. I pray constantly to the Lord for you, and this is the method of my prayer.

(15) I kneel on the hard floor of my little chamber, and send up the thoughts of my heart to the great Father of all. I summon up my recollections of my own father, and what I know of your homes, and all the happy homes where I have ever been a guest, and I multiply it a thousand, ten thousand-fold, and I enrich the conception with all that I can imagine of what Fatherhood must mean in heaven, and then I say 'Our Father.' And then, when I have dwelt on the divine glory for a while, till I begin to feel that I have links with it, and know how to comport myself before it, and what to say and what not to say, I begin to pour out my desire for you.

(16) And this is the burden of my desire for you. Is there perhaps something lacking in the completeness of

your spiritual equipment? A weak spot where reinforcement is needed? A gap that is not yet filled? I speak not of acts, or even habits. They are but symptoms. I am thinking of your inner selves, the deep well of character, whence actions and habits are thrown up. As a rich man keeps his chief treasures in an inner strong-room of his house, I want the deep centre of your life to be a stronghold where the Holy Spirit reigns, the Strengtheners, the Comforter, where He and you together, He, the Giver of life, and you with your glad obedience, make up a mansion where our Lord can come and dwell.

(17) And what I say is something like this—

Hear me, O merciful Father, I humbly beseech Thee, and with Thy Holy and Life-giving Spirit vouchsafe to bless and sanctify both them and all Thy gifts to them, that they may have within themselves the Life of Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

And all this in the happy confidence that you already know that Faith is the hand with which you fling wide the door, and Love is the smile with which you greet Him as He enters in.

Next, my petition for you is that you may be saved from any touch of pride in this. May you never think that it is your own doing. It is the infinite condescension of the Saviour, Who has planted your feet on the firm ground of His power and your humility. So, my prayer runs, may you take your stand on that which no man can take from under you. So may you increase in strength and in comprehension of the love divine which has found you and made you what you are.

(18) In this you are not alone. There is a solidarity of grace. With you are all the elect people of God, agonizing in temptation, prevailing over sin, exulting in faith. We are the Catholic Church. May you learn in the company

of all your brothers, known and unknown, the lesson which baffles the intelligence but yields its secret to humility, which is hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. May your spirits be lifted up to hail the love of Christ as it comes down from highest heaven, and founded so deeply on the everlasting rock that you find it as it reaches down to the profoundest levels of existence, may they be widened till they are touched with the wideness of Christ's mercy, and may they continue, thus elevated, founded, illuminated and extended, till the river of life is re-born into the ocean of eternity.

(19) God is the Plenitude of power and glory. May He fill you to the utmost limits of your being with all that you can receive of what He has to give, and bring you in the end, just men made perfect, to the full and open vision of Himself. Then, your pilgrimage accomplished, God will be all in all. (20) He can do this, and more than this. Man's desires, man's lame, halting formulations of what is truly to be desired, the utmost stretch of man's spiritual ambition, represent almost nothing when they are measures against God's power. Yet we are possessed by it. It transforms our intelligence, it purifies our crude imaginations, it opens our lips to shout His praise aloud. (21) Glory be to God for everything. Glory be to God that He has elected us to be His Church. Glory above all to God in that He has given us the Lord Christ to be our Head, and ourselves to be His Body. Glory be to God in Christ from century to century till time shall end.

IV. (1) It is my custom, as I put together my letters to this or that part of the Church, to begin with some message about God and His Revelation, and then to remind my readers of some practical duties which must be the fruits of their faith. I often link one part of my

letter to the other with a 'therefore.' What I am writing of this morning is a transition-passage. It does not cease—I don't think I ever really cease—to be doctrinal, and yet it is about your way of life on earth.

This, then, is my 'therefore.' The ethical implications of faith are of great moment. Here in the captive state to which our Lord has led me, I think of you walking through life, girding yourselves and walking whither you will. This walk of yours is a vocation. God is calling you all the time to make His will your will, and to become what He designs for you. Remember that, and your desires will fit into the pattern.

(2) The first thing is to banish pride. That marvellous word 'humble,' by which the famous philosopher Aristotle meant 'grovelling,' 'mean-spirited,' has been rescued by our Lord from degrading associations. He has conferred upon the despised Greek word a rich spiritual meaning. His own example and His teaching have reminded us that the High and Lofty One, Who inhabiteth eternity, is content to dwell with them that are of an humble spirit. They who are of such a spirit, with whom God dwells, will not be self-assertive. They will meekly submit themselves to the divine arbitrament in all things. They will endure hardships. They will be strong enough to bear being misjudged, misunderstood. They will not give railing for railing. They will not even say 'I told you so.' When other people are annoying, they will not take offence. Their love will cast out irritation.

(3) Above all things, they will know that 'fellowship is heaven, and the lack of fellowship is hell.' For you must remember that the unity of Christ's Church is not a thing which has been produced by ourselves. It is not that we ever said to one another, 'Look here, it is a pity to be disunited. Let us get together,' and so we got

together. That never happened, and, if it did, it would not be enough. Our unity is from above. It is born of the fact that we have all been baptized into the one Body, and have all been made to drink of the one Spirit.

Strive to maintain that God-created harmony. I had almost said 'Fight for it.' Let the whole brotherhood rejoice in the divine gift and continue in it—

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

(4) After all, the Body of Christ is one and indivisible. The seamless Robe cannot be rent. Whatever of human unfaithfulness or self-will may mar in practice the perfect co-operation of the Body, it is in the last resort one in Christ. It would be grotesque, and even blasphemous, to speak of more than one Body of Christ. One Christ, one Church.

Or look at it in this way. What is behind, within this Body, perpetually giving life to it? There is one Holy Spirit of God. Truth is not the collective wisdom of wise men, created in the factories of philosophy and assembled by the diligent co-ordinators of the Porch or the Academy. It is what God has to say to man. Therefore your duty is to remain within hearing of the one Spirit of Truth. You have been called by the one Voice. The hope that is set before you is the one hope of an else distracted world.

(5) Is Christ divided? Perish the thought! The Master Himself said that there would arise false Christs, false prophets, and that many would come in His name, saying, 'I am He.' But He added, 'Go not after them.' There has been, and can be, no second Christ. Jesus, the Christ, is your one Master. Therefore keep in step. Our faith in Him unites us. Day by day thousands of voices repeat 'Jesus is Lord.' That is our watchword, the oath of our

allegiance. How could we ever deny it, or forget it? It is the response that we first made when the one Spirit of the one Lord came on us in the waters of Baptism.

(6) Do you see what I am doing? How I am leading you, step by step, to the supreme end? I am teaching you to pass from the known to the less known, to climb through experience *ad astra*. For there are two ways of setting out our faith. If you wished to construct a logical statement, duly proceeding from premiss to conclusion, you would begin with God the Creator, and then speak of His self-disclosure in the Incarnation, and then of our Lord continuing in His Spirit what He had begun to do and teach in the flesh, and then you might go on to speak of the Church, and of all that we receive through it, fellowship, forgiveness, the hope of resurrection and eternal life. That would be a logical order, and for many purposes the most suitable method.

If, on the other hand, you wanted to commend the faith to unaccustomed or incredulous ears, you might begin at the other end, with the Church. There it is. No one can deny that. There really are in the world disciples of Christ. Then you could analyse what lies behind our Churchmanship, and so proceed from point to point until you reached the crown and climax, God Himself.

This is what I am actually doing now for you. I began 'There is one Body,' a platitude and a truism. I carried you from peak to peak, until we reach the summit, the First Cause of everything, the supreme reason why we must be one. There is one God over all, all men, all things, all continents and centuries, all worlds, transcendent, all-penetrating, Immanent.

(7) I pause on the word 'Immanent.' It means that the Supreme Being is not only the God above, but also

the God within. Most of all it means—and indeed without this the doctrine might be hardly more than a poetic fancy—most of all it means within us, within the faithful. We each have our share of the divine life. It comes to us as a gift. Just as our Lord in His earthly ministry chose Simon and the sons of Zebedee and Andrew and Philip and the rest, because they had something, and He could make more of it, so He has chosen and equipped us.

(8) That great pæan of praise in the Psalter, 'Let God arise,' has a picture of the conqueror riding, as it were, in triumph, simultaneously accepting the grateful tributes of the nation whose champion and saviour he has been, and also scattering among the cheering multitudes his bountiful largesse.

The words are—

He hath gone up on high, he hath led captivity captive, and hath given gifts unto men.

The words speak to us of some more than earthly conqueror. They mean that the Ascended Christ is Head of the Church, distributor of Grace.

(9) Christ, then, is the Giver of all spiritual gifts. And, be it remembered, He has earned the right to do this. If it be asked: By what authority doeth He these things? The answer is that He won the authority in the days of His flesh, in the fields and streets and alleyways of human life, down on the ground, man among men, tasting the joys and sorrows of our life, and finally enduring death, and then passing through that mysterious underworld, where spirits in prison wait for the coming of the day. (10) That is the secret of our confidence. He has carried our mortal nature to the right hand of God, so that the Potentate who fills the universe is one who still has His human state and still bears His human name.



(11) That is why He must have here His Church, the earthly end, as it were, of His own life. To direct it He has chosen His apostles, the twelve and a few more, to bear witness of His triumph over earthly death, His heralds who break fresh ground to sow the seed, His shepherds who instruct the young and ignorant. (12) In this way all the believers take their part, the *Ecclesia docens* and the *Ecclesia discens*, all dovetailed, as it were, into a gigantic organism for ministering to the need of the world. (13) So the body is built up, and we move forward to the one divine event to which the whole creation moves. It may be near, it may be far—what is a century to God?—but there will come a time when the Faith has its triumph, one world, one Church, one Faith, when all mankind will know why they were always so frustrated, and what is the true satisfaction of their longings, the true portrait of their ideal. Then man will be perfected, grown to his full stature, and Christ will have the fulness of His inheritance.

(14) In this life we are children, and, like children, we are wayward, the victims of the last new cry, blown hither and thither by every wind of change, eagerly swallowing the baits of unscrupulous pedlars who know all the tricks of the trade. They see us coming. They mark down their captives, they mean to have us as their prey. (15) What is the defence against these clever gentry? Why, truth. Seeking it, speaking it, sticking to it, that is how you baffle them. These double-dealers are so accustomed to double-dealing that the simple truth surprises and confounds them. But it does more than that. For what is truth? Our Lord said, 'I am the Truth.' Veracity, the kind of utter veracity that springs from sincerity and integrity of character, is a road that leads to Christ.

(16) Think of the assembling of a great machine. The parts are all there. Skilled hands lay them in position. One by one they drop, with that satisfying click that every mechanic knows so well, into their right place. Ah, but there is more than that. We are not nuts and bolts and cranks and bars, but members of a living body. Each has its function, each has its little item of capacity which no one else could furnish. We are nerves, fibres, muscles, vertebrae, alive and—this is where even my second illustration breaks down—conscious, willing to be used. We know we are constructing something, or perhaps rather being, with our own consent, constructed. We are growing into a body, and the exhilarating recollection all the time is that, as we grow, the body grows. The loving care with which we execute our several offices makes the whole temple of the Body a worthy habitation for the King of Love.

(17) What follows? I will tell you. And my words are solemn words. In the name of the Lord, whose witness I am, you have to mind your step. There must be no more aimless vacillation.

Most men eddy about  
Here and there—eat and drink,  
Chatter, and love, and hate,  
Gather and squander, are rais'd  
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,  
Striving blindly, achieving  
Nothing; and then they die—  
Perish—and no one asks  
Who or what they have been.

(18) That is the pagan life, futile, unprofitable, barren. Having eyes, they see not, because a great darkness lies on their soul. They have no root, no contact with reality.

God is in truth all round them, but they are not aware of Him; they do not breathe in the air of His Spirit, they are strangers to His life. Poor dears, they do not know. Yet there is something that they could know. It is not simply that they have never been told. (19) It is that a long course of self-pleasing has hardened their spiritual arteries. They have flung away such birthright as they had. They have denied the promptings of their better self. They have dulled their conscience, and now they can find no better way of living than to be profligate, to wallow in the gutters of the street of life, and daub themselves with slime because—because it is right? Because there is any kind of principle about it? Because it embodies some ideal? No, because 'I like it, because that is how I choose to live.'

(20) You, brothers, have a different picture of what life can be. You are Christ's men—you have been trained in the true school. (21) Your ethical standards are derived not from cunningly-devised fables, but from the story of the one perfect human life—

The sinless years

That breath'd beneath the Syrian blue.

I am not accustomed to speak of our divine Redeemer by His earthly name without any of such titles as devotion loves to give, but this time I do, and I say that the true vocation for every disciple is to be as like Jesus as he can. (22) The old way of life must be utterly cast off. It was the life of the unconverted man, unsound, corrupt, unable to survive, having in itself the seeds of its own destruction, because it was governed by false standards.

(23) Now the New Day has dawned. You know that there is more than one kind of newness, or rather there are many kinds, and there is also one. It is possible to

run after every novelty, to spend time (I could not help thinking this when I was in Athens) in nothing else than hearing or telling some new thing. (24) It is also possible to have your whole outlook revolutionized, to be re-created from within, to have a new self, the self which God creates for you and gives you. From now you live after God's pattern for you, obedient to the divine Law, separated from all sin. Above all, the new life is the real life, the life that is the life indeed.

(25) What does it involve? Well, it means for one thing, to begin with something quite elementary, no lying. The other man must be able to believe you when you speak, or there is no fellowship. One hand does not deceive the other, and one member of Christ is honest with his fellow.

Anger? Well, it may be, yes, I suppose it may be, that you are right to be angry now and then. I certainly have felt my temper rising on occasions. But watch it. Anger might pass into violence or cruelty, and the end of those things is red-handed murder. (26) Anyhow, don't nurse your wrath after sundown. By next morning it should all have been forgotten. (27) Remember that the Devil is close at hand, to turn what you are pleased to call your righteous indignation into sin.

Then again some of you were apt in old days to overlook the difference between *meum* and *tuum*. Pinching you called it, or scrounging, or, in more literary style, conveying. Well, it was stealing. Don't steal what is not yours. You have a pair of hands: don't let them be pickers and stealers. (28) Work with them. Produce something. Get on with your job. Earn your wages, and then at the end of the week you will be able to help a poorer brother with a good conscience. The Robin Hood way of life is not really sound.

(29) Don't tell dirty stories. Language is a great gift of God, and wit is good, but let your jests be wholesome. A man's speech should edify his hearers. I don't mean that he should be always preaching, or improving the occasion. I mean that speech helps to build up the character. The other man should always be not worse but better for having heard what you have said. (30) The Holy Spirit is grieved when you play fast and loose with either truth or decency. Remember that you are defended with God's heavenly grace, that you may increase in His Holy Spirit more and more. The holy seal has been pressed upon your nature. You are picked men, and if you live worthy of the Fatherly Hand over you and the Holy Spirit within you, then, when the Great Day dawns, when probation is ended, and the Lord comes to redeem His people out of this sinful world, He will know who are His. (31) The Judge will not then acknowledge those who have let themselves become bitter, pessimistic, grudge-nursing, or men who think to silence opposition by loud shouting, or abuse, or those who cherish secret ill-will to another in their hearts. (32) No, rather those whom He will recognize as His, who will rejoice at His appearing, will be the kind, good-hearted brothers, the merciful, those who have been ready to forgive their fellow-servant the trifling obligation of a hundred pence, because the Cross of Christ has won for them release from the crushing burden of the ten thousand talent debt which they owed to their Master in Heaven. V. (1) That is what God is like. His property is always to have mercy and to forgive. So do to one another. You are God's children, all of you, beloved children: act in the spirit of the Family. (2) Love one another. One of the Psalmists, falling for the moment below the highest standards, said of the righteous man, 'He shall rejoice when he seeth the ven-

geance, he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly.' Christ's people wash their steps in love. If there is any thought of blood at all, it must be when you remember that Christ loved you to the uttermost, shedding for you His precious blood. His sacrifice, His self-oblation to the Glory of God, was well-pleasing to the Father.

It is said in all simplicity in Genesis that when, after the Flood, the Patriarch Noah offered sacrifice, the Lord smelled the sweet savour and said, 'I will not again curse the ground any more.' In a more spiritual way the Prophet Ezekiel makes the Lord say to Israel, 'As a sweet savour I will accept you.' The meaning of all this to us is that the Cross was a prevailing, effectual sacrifice. As I have put it elsewhere, God in Christ reconciled the world unto Himself.

(3) There are some sins which the pagan world holds lightly. One of them, alas, is fornication. Not only should you never be guilty of this, but it is a thing not even to be named by Christian lips,(4) and there are other indecent practices and ways of satisfying unauthorized lusts to be banished even from your vocabulary. In what you say there must be nothing shameful, nothing even that is merely foolish: your jokes must be clean and wholesome. If you want an outlet for bubbling enthusiasm, lift up your hearts in thanksgiving and say 'Glory be to God.' (5) I know I do not really have to tell you that the fornicator, the unclean liver, the man who makes a god of his desires, has no place in the Kingdom. The Father has said, 'Be ye holy,' and the Son has said, 'Ye shall be perfect.' You must not run the risk of one day hearing those condemning words, 'Depart from Me, I never knew you.'

(6) People will tell you that it does not matter much, that indulgence of the body is natural, or perhaps, more speciously, that if the soul has faith, the body may be allowed to do what it will. This is nonsense, and wicked nonsense at that. And I must warn you that disobedience by those who have been once enlightened is a grave sin. God is merciful to sinners, but He really does hate sin. The wrath of God is no mere figure of speech. As brother Apollos sometimes says, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. For our God is a consuming fire.'

(7) There are some who do not seem to care. They have forgotten their true sonship. They have sold their birthright. They are, in an old Semitic phrase, 'sons of disobedience.' If they should invite you to share their practices, the suggestion must not for a moment be entertained. You are of another spiritual kin.

(8) It is true, of course, that you were once possessed by darkness, an inner darkness, the darkness of the soul. You were not merely in the dark, you *were* darkness. But that is all over. The Son of Righteousness is risen, with healing in His wings. You are now not merely enlightened; you are light. The glory of the Lord illuminates you. You are irradiated, and you yourselves reflect the divine rays. (9) Not for you now the stumbling footsteps of those who pick their painful and precarious way by night. You stride forward boldly, 'with braced muscles in the sunshine,' into the glad, confident morning. The light does not merely illuminate, it inspires. Almost it might be said that the warm kiss of the morning sun impregnates the spirit of man, and his issue is seen in a wholesome, just and sincere way of life, (10) in which it is a simple thing to be pleasing to the Lord, because you have in you a taste, a standard, a spiritual discern-

ment, which recognizes and responds to the calm pressure of His holy will.

(11) Darkness is sterile. Do not waste your powers in unprofitable co-operation with that which satisfieth not, the fundamentally barren, and indeed in the long run self-destructive processes of evil. Identify them as they lurk in the shadows, and convict them as the slimy things they are. (12) Do not even spend time or breath in talking about such things. Dismiss them with an annihilating silence. The torch of a just judgment reveals them in their true nature. They hate the light and slink away from it. A judgment which condemns them is a true judgment, reflecting the pure standard of the Father of all light. There is a hymn which says:

(14) Sleep no longer, Christian pilgrim,  
Fling the chains of death away;  
Christ is risen, Christ is risen;  
Live in Christ's eternal day.

(15) Of course you must not presume on this. The faithful are not mysteriously guided forward in a kind of unconscious ecstasy. Even in the daylight they must watch their step. It is a sin to be silly, unless you cannot help it. Be as sensible as you can. (16) Time is a hard trader. Drive a hard bargain with him. Sell your hours and days and years to good advantage. Buy with them that which is worth having, pearls of great price. The times in which we live are dangerous: if handled amiss, they may bring grave disaster, but, thanks be to God, they are susceptible to the Redeemer's touch of grace. (17) For this you will want all your common sense. There must be no shilly-shallying, no wool-gathering, no lazy indifference. God has His purpose for you. Discern it. Cling to it. Make it your own.



(18) When you are taking your natural and inevitable part in social life, beware of drunkenness. Strong drink is one of the dangerous good gifts of God, but excessive indulgence will rob you of the precious gift of self-control. Let your sole intoxication be that of the exhilarating might of the Pentecostal Spirit, which lays hold of you and lifts you to a higher power, but yet does not unman you, but rather makes you all that God means you to be. (19) The expression of that exhilaration will not be the loose-lipped mouthings of a drunken sot, but the lifting of heart and voice in the glorious old psalms of David, or songs of Christian thankfulness and praise, and the music in your heart will be heard in heaven and set all the celestial bells a-ringing.

(20) The *motif* always is eucharistic, thankful. Count your blessings. Give thanks to God for everything: for creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all for the redemption by Christ Jesus our Lord, for the means of grace and hope of glory, and let your sense of what Christ does for you carry you up to adore the supreme Father whom the Lord Christ came to reveal. (21) The recollection of the divine Majesty will keep you humble, will make you count others more important, even better than yourselves, will make you fear to grieve the Master by even the smallest touch of pride.

(22) Now a word to the wives. Defer to your husband. Give him his share of the authority which you recognize in the Lord Himself. (23) After all, the man is the head of the family, and so also the head of the wife. There is a sort of parallel between the two relationships. Christ and the Church, husband and wife. Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body. He is the Giver of Salvation

to the Body. The man is the head of the wife and family. He gives direction to the body.

(24) A principle of subordination runs through the universe. A due measure of the obedience which all of us, men and women, give to our common Master, must be given to the husband. He takes the lead and sets the pace. (25) Now this, of course, gives to the husband an immense responsibility. He must learn all he can of Christ's sublime and perfect love for mankind. Greater love hath none than this, that a man lay down his life for another. Christ did that very thing. For the Church He gave Himself, and it seemed to Him but a small thing for the love that He bare to her. Men, learn of Him this lesson. Spend yourselves day by day in devoted loving care for the wife of your bosom. (26) Consider what was our Lord's motive in His life and death on earth. It was to create the Church. That precious blood, poured out on the Cross, was the seed of the Church. In it was contained the sure and certain promise of the regenerating grace of Baptism, of the matter and form of the initiating sacrament, the cleansing water and the welcoming, enabling words. (27) On Calvary He purchased us to be His own, to make us and mend us, and sanctify and glorify us, till at last He gather His church to His bosom, meet spouse for a heavenly Bridegroom; spotless, immaculate, without one crease or blemish to mar the smoothness of its now perfected beauty, a holy Church, wherein none can lay anything to the charge of God's elect.

(28) Even so, or as nearly as he can compass, must the man love his wife. She is, after all, of his body, a part of him, the half of him, and, as some would say, the better half. To love your wife is in a sense to love yourself. (29) No one but a fool ever hates his own body. A man takes thought and care for his body. He gives to it the

food and treatment that it needs. (30) His care for it is an example, in terms of human life, of the unceasing care of Christ, the Good Shepherd, for His Church. Christ loves the members of His Body, as a man is eager to maintain the clearness of his eyesight, the strength of the muscles in his arms.

(31) This explains why a man's marriage is the most important thing in his life. He has lived in the home of his boyhood, the son of his parents. He meets the woman whom God has sent to be his joint-heir of the grace of life. He falls in love. They marry and a new life begins. There is now another home. Father and mother are not indeed forgotten, but he must leave them, and become himself the founder of another family; man and wife, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do them part. They are indeed—and here the physical is but the outward expression of a deep spiritual truth—one flesh. (32) It is one of those profound disclosures of the Supernatural Order, one of those things which have existed since man lived on the Earth, but were imperfectly understood. There has been marriage from the beginning, but man never knew its real significance. All human love is of course a part of the divine Love. The old marriages were spiritual, but it is the contemplation of the marvellous relationship which is between Christ and His Church that reveals what Holy Matrimony can be. (33) And the moral of it is one that should go straight home to every man that is among you. Your wife is part of your own self. Love her and cherish her. And let not the wife take it amiss if I say that there should be a touch of fear in the deference which she pays to her man.

VI. (1) For children the first and greatest virtue is

obedience, especially to father and mother. They know best. It is very meet, right, and your bounden duty, to obey them, and it makes our Lord happy when He sees it. (2) The injunction has the authority of Mount Sinai. Parents have dignity, and the children must honour them. (3) And, remember, the Heavenly Father, by the lips of Moses, joined with this charge a promise of long and happy life. And you, fathers, remember that the injunction runs both ways. You must respect the developing personality of the children. Elicit the best from them. Do not thwart them without necessity. Children are not very stable; do not try them too hard, lest resentment should flare up into ill-temper. They are the Lord's children: cherish them, train them, teach them, control them, that they may take their happy place amid the number of those of whom He said, 'Suffer them to come unto Me.'

(5) Some of you to whom I write this are, in the life of this world, slaves. While this condition lasts, and I for my part see no political prospect of its abolition, you have your duty. Master is master, and slave is slave. It is for you to do the master's will, with alacrity, with all proper respect. It is even right that you should fear to incur his displeasure. It is, of course, but an earthly duty, by eternal standards a small thing, but it can be discharged with generosity; it is part of your service to the Master Christ. (6) I mean this—Study your master's desires, but beware of mere window-dressing. He is a poor servant who hides his own negligence by some blanket of pretence, or deliberately panders to his master's weaker side by suggesting or providing some compromise of principle. You have to remember that your daily service in the house is part of your service to the Lord Christ, and it is God's will that in your station, as it is

for the present, you should serve as your master shall command. (7) True service is not of hand or lip only, but from the heart, and is given with good-will. On your daily chart of duties it appears as due to a human master, but in the book where the recording angels write, it is registered as part of your perpetual service of the Lord. (8) You do not perform it in order to receive a heavenly reward—that would spoil everything—but there is a reward. Whatever a man soweth, that shall he reap. Master and servant, side by side, in this life, with their several vocations; master and servant, side by side, at the Great Day, awaiting the verdict and hoping for the blessed words, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

(9) For those of you who have slaves to do your will, there is a corresponding duty of consideration. You must serve the best interests of your servants. When orders must be issued, there is no need to shout or bluster or threaten; you are all God's children. The infinite regard of the supreme Judge will take no note of terrestrial distinctions. Prostrate before His throne we fall, and the first to hear the word of mercy, 'Rise and stand upon thy feet,' may have been in this life an emperor or a nobody.

(10) I draw near to the end of this long letter. Life is for all of us a struggle. You will need all your fortitude. Yours, do I say? The source of courage, strength and power is elsewhere, from the Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things. He can supply all your need. (11) He has an armoury with vast stores of equipment to meet every necessity. The enemy, the common enemy of mankind, is full of wiles, but there is provision for you; you can buckle on your harness and take your stand on the battle-ground, forewarned and forearmed.

(12) For, mark my words, this contest is no simple wrestling-match against some human opponent. There is no question of measuring the strength of your muscles or the agility of your foot-work in the ring. The adversaries are the myrmidons of evil, the sinister captains and centurions of the mysterious realm where Satan is king. They are permitted to have some authority; they exercise a certain measure of dominion at that sunless level which is part of the spiritual world, but the lower, poisonous part. We know from bitter experience that we have a worse side to our character. We have in us that which is bad. These spirits are bad through and through.

(13) I sit here in my captivity, day after day, beside a Roman soldier of the guard, and he is on duty and armed *cap-à-pie*. The daily sight of him, and the recollection of some words of the prophet Isaiah, have given me the idea which I pass on to you, that the Christian is a warrior, that there is another suit of armour, for another warfare, this grim struggle of which I have been speaking. So I say to you, buckle on your harness. It is the gift of God, the spiritual accoutrements which you will need against the coming of the evil day. You will, perhaps, reel and stagger with the force of the adversary's onset, but you will be prepared and armed, you will have taken all reasonable precautions, and then, let come what will, the world of evil will see that you can stand.

(14) Stand then in your shining armour. You will have put it on piece by piece. There is first the girdle of your loins. That is sincerity. At the base of your physical being the least hint of falsehood would spoil all. Then for defence, the breast, where the heart lies, must be adequately covered. Feelings are light, and may be treacherous. It is vital that the governing motive be sound and wholesome, and then your heart will not mislead you. Therefore

you will need your breastplate. (15) A breastplate is a strong, heavy thing, but it must not make you immobile. You must be quick-footed, alert to avoid danger and to seize opportunities. Strap on the ever-ready shoes, the symbols and the instruments of that universal gospel which came sweeping down from heaven and now must go dancing through the world.

(16) With all this the body is protected, but you will need not only to resist a thrust, but to parry and prevent it. You must have a shield. And what is that? Why, what but faith, the gift which surrounds you with an aura of security; it is your link with the supernatural world of God. The hot, flaming shafts of wickedness will come hissing round you, new-forged amid the fires of hell, but your serene faith will reduce them to impotence, and you will be safe.

(17) Then, you must cover your head in the day of battle. Brains are essential in this warfare, and happily there is a headpiece which crowns the whole equipment and integrates your spiritual state. Then this must be added: the best form of defence is attack. You must have your sword. The sword is that word of God, that revelation of God's Nature, of which my Brother Apollos has rightly said, 'The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.' With that sundering weapon which the Holy Spirit of God Himself puts into your hands, you can divide the world of your environment, and set part of it on one side for the purposes of life, and the other part on the other side for dismissal and destruction.

(18) These weapons of defence and attack are all good, but the arm that wields the sword, and the man that wears the harness, must be alive, alert, and recollected. The stroke of sword and the parry with the shield, must

be the expression of an inner life of prayer, continued, purposeful, persevering, keeping your own needs and hopes and fears, and those of all God's people, continually presented before the sight of His divine majesty, with the petition that He do with them according to His holy will.

(19) And herein forget not to remember me, that I may have the spirit and wisdom to utter the tidings which possess me. I need insight to discern and courage to declare the whole counsel of God. The sublime, world-moving revelations of which I am a herald, are too profound for my poor human intellect to grasp. Hold me before God on the wings of your supplication.

(20) Prisoner as I am, I am yet an ambassador of God, and I shall not rise to the height of my vocation unless, like Hur and Aaron on the mountain, you hold up my hands. Then, borne upward and compassed about and fortified by your devout remembrance of me, I shall be bold indeed, and my voice will ring out to the world.

(21) As I said, I am a prisoner, but I have my life from day to day. Brother Tychicus will report to you of my health and happiness, and how I spend my time. I should have liked to keep him with me, for I love him well, and he has proved himself, in his ministering to me, a loyal and trusty servant of the Lord, (22) but I send him with this letter. I am sure that you will want to know all about me. He will tell you the latest news, and if you should stand in need of encouragement, he is the man who can supply it.

(23) And now at last I close this long letter. May the peace of God encompass you and bind you in a true brotherhood. May the love of God be shed abroad in your hearts. Reach out the hands of faith and draw His peace and His love unto yourselves. They are the gifts of



God the Father, and they come to us through the one Mediator of all His Gifts to Man. (24) Grace, that is God in action, God showering His mercy and loving-kindness upon mankind, Grace be your portion, your inheritance and your wealth. Continue in your love of our Lord Jesus Christ, love Him with a pure heart, with that clean transparent love which is a foretaste of the immortal life of heaven, which has but one single motive, to adore, and your Beloved is yours and you are His.